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ABSTRACT

The status and educational objectives of Latin instruction in the preparatcry schools in England are examined in these articles. Curricular requirements, various examinations, and source materials are discussed. Criticism is directed toward the curriculum and in particular to the Common Entrance Examinatien to public schools. Several sample specimen examinations are appended. (RI)

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Latin in Preparatory Schools I

E. J. B. LANGHORNE

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Are our gems authentic? And how should they adorn the studies of society in the 20th century – a society whose material background and being is wholly scientific and which bends over backwards to turn out more technologists and more scientists? These are questions which trouble or excite the minds of teachers of the Classics at all levels in our schools and universities who think wider than the immediate target of the term in the classroom. The answer of the best and most enlightened opinion can be accurately resumed under four heads:

1 that there is and will be less time for Greek and Roman studies in the time tables of a highly technological and scientific age. The status of the Classics is bound to be different but their value will be undiminished.

2 the case for the Classics must now rest on two props – irrefragable props:

a that Greece and Rome supply the tap roots of civilization in Western Europe. We have them in our blood-stream. Our own condition – though we criticize and plan to change it – is not to be understood without harking back to these ancient and yet strangely contemporary civilizations;

b that not only are our own ways of thought and living shot through with the colours of Greece and Rome, but we have within the corpus of their writers a number of acknowledged proven masterpieces of poetry and prose, philosophy, politics

and rhetoric, which have defied time, fashion and translation to pour in millions from the popular presses of the Western World. To read them in translation is good: to do so in their original tongues is better still. Acquaintance with them is bound to deepen our sense of values and enlarge personal experience;

3 that the foregoing posits the prime aim of investment in the classics today: early and direct contact with the actual words of Greek and Roman writers. The aim, at different levels of achievement, is the same both for the slow-coach or dim-wit and the boy who will one day reach Balliol with an open scholarship;

4 both the content of classical syllabuses and teaching techniques need to be adapted or radically revised to serve this end.

Mine is the preparatory sector and my purpose to show how the preparatory facet of our common gems might be polished to refract a new light.

Preliminary considerations are the existing syllabus in Latin, the requirements of the Public Schools in the Scholarship and Common Entrance Examinations, and the quality of the candidates. The Public Schools have long been accustomed to educating – and with signal success at both ends of the upper IQ scale – a wider range of intelligence than the Grammar Schools; but the preparatory spectrum is wider still. In a large and efficient preparatory school – and a prep. school has to be large today to be economically viable – will be found at one pole a minority of boys so equipped intellectually as to be in the running for open awards in the top ten Public Schools: at the opposite pole we look after an even smaller number of boys whose linguistic equipment is so sparse that the Common Entrance Examination represents their ceiling in Latin. In between these crusts occurs the filler substance, the majority, who can be separated in the proportion, perhaps, of 60 to 40 into two further categories: the ordinary CEE candidates who will qualify for the Public Schools of their parents' choice but whose ac-

quaintance with the classics is likely to cease at O-level and will certainly not extend beyond A-level; and, secondly, the boys who will take the Common Entrance A papers in their stride and reach a high enough standard in the B papers to skip the bottom forms in their Public Schools. They may even be placed in the same form with the scholars and have Latin as an O-level subject behind them within twelve months. Some of these boys will opt for the Classics as their highroad to the university, or other avocations, and most of them will continue Greek or Latin to Advanced level.

This is a miscellaneous legion and the Common Entrance board are wise to adopt the device of an A paper and a B paper in Latin, French and Maths to sort out the cavalry from the infantry and to eliminate the camp followers. The A paper is the one in which the candidate must reach a pass mark of 50, 55, 60 or 65% – this varies from Public School to Public School – and the B paper – more advanced – has nothing to do with passing and is used entirely for placing the more intelligent boys. As the A and B papers in Latin accurately mirror the latest syllabus laid down by the Standing Joint Committee of HMC and IAPS the best plan will be to append on pages 118 and 119 a sample of each paper.

In my scheme of things for preparatory Latin in an altered climate it is axiomatic that the syllabus implicit in these papers ought to comprise material which forms both a unity with intrinsic value for those whose *terminus ad quem* in Latin it is, and a valuable staging post for those with the requisite intellectual powers in their journey towards higher classics. The syllabus should also embrace the Roman people – who they were, what they achieved, and how their insights and institutions have affected the western way of life. It should point the way clearly and emphatically towards early acquaintance with Roman writers.

How do these papers make out on these counts? Their requirements in basic accidence and syntax are sound, scholarly and sensible and can scarcely be faulted; but the Roman substance

is trivial. After five, six, or even seven periods of Latin per week for at least three years, the average and above average preparatory schoolboy need not know one fact of Roman history and can get by without ever having heard of Palinurus, Vulcan, Hadrian's Wall, Isca Silurum or the Colosseum. Nor even in the B papers does he meet with a genuine undoctored passage from a Roman author. The papers are solely concerned with linguistic skills – and these at a lowish level – which have little relevance or value in the modern world. To plan a course and, *a fortiori*, cause Common Entrance papers to be set which agree with the view that the Greeks and Romans are still important for us because their ideas and works have profoundly affected the ways in which we think and live and because they expressed themselves in poetry and prose which will forever excite men's minds – this is a task which screams for attention and will soon be forced upon us by the tide of events at a higher level if we do not ourselves look ahead and seek to strengthen and rationalize the defences of Latin while it is still a universal subject in Preparatory Schools and obligatory for Public School entrance. I suspect that the Standing Joint Committee would relish a fiat to this effect from HMC and IAPS.

Translation, of course, is the nub. The Oxford Refresher Courses in Latin (usually with a sidelong glance at Greek) run by IAPS in conjunction with the University Department of Education are most stimulating gatherings notable for the high quality of the instruction, the lively enthusiasm of apprentices and initiates, and the subtle infusion by the experts of up-to-date and revitalizing theory into our classroom teaching techniques. Over a period of twelve years in four consecutive courses we have heard from three successive top classicists in the Inspectorate the doctrine of salvation by translation. From the riches of their wit, scholarship and practical inventiveness in the classroom they have conspicuously signposted the road which leads both to small Latin and to large Latin. It is paved almost *ab initio* with blocks of continuous Latin – *acta Romanorum*, significant vivid stuff which occupies a well-planned page. The

triumvirate have likewise performed the invaluable office of ingeminating the cardinal virtues of briskness and pace – not being stranded on the sands of syntactical points when we ought to be getting on and finding out what happened next.

These consecutive and combined efforts notwithstanding, prep. school Latin remains pretty arid country. Oases of enlightenment there are, but far too many boys still labour towards the promised land through a desert of English sentences to be done into Latin. They are able in the end to turn out reasonably accurate indirect statements, questions and commands, purpose and consequence clauses in Latin, while their chief difficulty is to discriminate between these constructions in their own tongue and before they have met them and can move readily among them in good made-up Latin or the pages of a Roman writer. And when they arrive – mostly in their third and CEE year – the goal turns out to be CEE snippets and long passages of adapted Latin – often dull stuff and densely packed on the page – the sight of which nonplusses them and which they are equipped neither to understand nor enjoy. For they have come by the wrong route; there is no logical progression but a gulf to be spanned: and this is the cause of their consternation. It is at this point that they should be advancing not from the known and familiar to the unknown, not from segments of Latin to wide stretches of the language, but from good continuous synthetic Latin to the real thing.

Theory and practice point to the same solution: with the proviso that relevant points must first be properly understood in English, continuous Latin should be the means of progress almost from the outset. Oral and blackboard juggling with the verb will soon accustom boys to inflexion. As soon as they can manipulate the subject-object-verb relationship and understand the concepts of person and number (tense need not be long delayed) then all their instruction should be based on simple straightforward passages of Latin which engage their minds because they hang together in paragraphs on the page and make sense. It is thus – in the context of the Greeks and the Romans,

their myths and legends, their deeds, gods and heroes – that boys should become familiar with the declensions and conjugations, adjectives and adverbs, time, space and motion.

Nor will this rapid advance on the wide front of significant meaning omit pauses for pockets of accidence and syntax to be cleared up – for assimilation and ordering in boys' minds. The pause for this purpose should not be regarded as a chore but as splendid fun with words and a valuable opportunity to reduce to order and bring within a logical pattern what has hitherto occurred piecemeal. I would go as far as to say that here is the enterprising teacher's chance – though he would not use the terms – to lay the foundations of inductive and deductive thinking. Nor should the joy of mastery be forgotten, the sense of power that a boy can and should get in these periods from appropriating and lining his memory with necessary portions of knowledge which are neither particularly easy nor specially complex.

Order of words too should from the first be the natural Latin order – with much reading aloud. There is no reason at all why a boy should not see within three weeks that '*barbari captivos necant*' means 'the barbarians slay their prisoners', whereas '*captivos necant barbari*' means 'it is the barbarians who slay their prisoners'. At a later stage he will then have no difficulty in spotting where the emphasis lies. '*Pugnatum est ab utrisque acriter*' will not be 'both sides fought fiercely'; but: 'the fighting on both sides was equally bitter'. English into Latin will be mostly oral with retranslation from time to time; and I especially like Vellacott's analogous pairs of sentences both for oral and written practice. This is a method which falls into line with the main objective and causes boys to look closely and think furiously all the time.

Working along these lines with a lively and skilful teacher a respectable form should be ready in their fourth or fifth term for some such book as *A General Certificate Latin Reader* (*The Romans and Their World*), by Nash-Williams, which deals in summary but interesting fashion with the early history of Rome, Caesar

in Gaul, and the Roman occupation of Britain. The prose is good straightforward Latin with syntax that ranges from relative clauses through indirect statements, questions and commands, and an abundance of participles to the Gerund, Gerundive, *Quin* and *Quominus* and Concessive Clauses. Translation of this sort is the natural prelude to the Roman writers themselves. At the beginning of their third year it is reasonable to expect that these boys will be able to tackle and enjoy Caius Julius Caesar, Cornelius Nepos, Pliny and Aulus Gellius, all of whom are available nowadays, either solus or assorted, in editions that look good and handle well.

The potential scholars, who will have begun Latin at the same stage in the school as ordinary mortals but at a lesser age, can look forward to a further year – or even two years – in the scholarship form of their preparatory schools, where their programme is likely to embrace Livy, Cicero, perhaps portions of Tacitus and much more than a nodding acquaintance with Ovid and Virgil. Catullus, carefully chosen, would be prominent in my own list. In parenthesis, I entirely dissent from the view that Caesar is a dull author. On the contrary his chronicles have vivid interest, the terrain often suggests parallels with the great wars in our own times, and he cannot be matched for saying exactly what he means in direct, terse, and perspicuous prose.

At all stages there will be regular reading aloud in Latin with the master on the job when the passage is introduced and the boys after the sense has been mastered. By their third year they should be reading with sufficient accuracy and expression to show that what they are uttering in Latin they are understanding in Latin.

From the second year onwards there will also be frequent excursions into books like T. E. Shaw's translation of the *Odyssey* and C. Day Lewis's *Aeneid*: every master will have his special favourites and should not blush to be his own propagandist. In this day and age the classics abound and flourish in translation: especially good are the Penguin Classics, Mentor Books and the

7

paperbacks of the Chicago University Press. Frequent use should be made of them, not only for their own sake, but to speed and assist the competence of learners in their Common Entrance and Scholarship years.

At this stage translation should be rapid and *in extenso*, with much help given – for pace is vital. They must get the feel of the language and this is possible even with less than clever boys if the hunt is sufficiently up for them to want to chase the meaning for themselves. Equally important are regular pauses for slow close examination of selected passages and the accurate rendering of their substance into clear, idiomatic, nervous English.

THUS

Lake Trasimene

Romae ad primum nuntium cladis eius cum ingenti terrore ac tumultu concursus in forum populi est factus. Matronae vagae per vias, quae repens clades adlata quaeve fortuna exercitus esset, obvios percunctantur. Et cum frequentis contionis modo turba in comitium et curiam versa magistratus vocaret, tandem haud multo ante solis occasum M. Pomponius praetor 'pugna' inquit 'magna victi sumus'; et quamquam nihil certius ex eo auditum est, tamen alius ab alio inpleti rumoribus domos referunt consulem cum magna parte copiarum caesum, superesse paucos aut fuga passim per Etruriam sparsos aut captos ab hoste. Quot casus exercitus victi fuerant, tot in curas distracti animi eorum erant, quorum propinqui sub C. Flaminio consule meruerant, ignorantium, quae cuiusque fortuna suorum esset; nec quisquam satis certum habet, quid aut speret aut timeat.

VIA

In Rome at the first news of this disaster there happened a rush of people into the forum with great terror and tumult. Mothers abroad in the streets ask those tΛhe meet what sudden disaster had been reported or what was the fortune of the army. And when the crowd, in the manner of a full assembly, turned towards the meeting place and Senate-house, was calling upon the magistrates, at length, not much before sundown, Marcus Pomponius the praetor said 'we have been defeated in a great battle'; and although nothing more certain was heard from him, full one from another with rumours they bring back to their homes the news that the consul with a great part of his forces has been slain, that a few men were surviving either scattered hither and thither in flight throughout Etruria or taken by the enemy. Many as the mischances of the beaten army had been, just so many were the anxieties that distracted the minds of those whose relatives had served under the consul Gaius Flaminius, ignorant as they were of the fate of each one of their families.

BECOMES

When word of this disaster reached Rome, crowds thronged the forum much afraid and in a state of great confusion. Mothers were abroad in the streets and earnestly begged those they met for news. What sudden calamity had befallen? How were things with the army? Then the crowd, in the manner of a full assembly, headed for the meeting place and the Senate-house and began to importune the magistrates; eventually not much before sundown Marcus Pomponius said, 'There has been a great battle and we are the losers'. Although nothing more definite could be had from him, yet were they full of each other's rumours and carried word to their homes that one consul had been slain with most of his troops; that survivors were few and either dispersed in flight throughout the length and breadth of Etruria or in the hands of the enemy. No fewer than the blows which had fallen upon the beaten army were the anxieties that tore the minds of those whose relatives had served under the consul Gaius Flaminius, ignorant as they were of the fate of their kith and kin. And no-one had sure grounds for hope or fear.

This sort of process seems to me to have the same kind of value as Latin Prose Composition and to be much more directly related to one of the main ends of classical education in the 20th century: familiarity with first-rate Roman authors and the ability to arrive at their full and exact meaning. Mr Renford Bambrough argues in *Didaskalos* II that Latin Prose Composition must be preserved because undergraduates and school children read Greek and Roman authors with close attention in order to compose well in those languages. To my mind his argument works with at least equal force in an opposite sense: without attending closely to the actual words of his Roman author a boy will neither possess the exact sense of what he said nor be able to convey his substance in good English Prose.

And surely, today, the ability to compose well in English – and from the best Latin sources – is a more valuable accomplishment and no less satisfying than to be able to turn, say, a leading article from *The Times* into elegant Ciceronian Latin. What is needed in Preparatory Classics today is the substitution of English Prose Composition for Latin Prose Composition – with the quality of the English commanding the same assiduous quarrying for words and precise chiselling of the meaning that for generations has been linked with the art of Latin Prose.

This is not to deny to those who covet it the art of Latin Prose Composition. But let it be seen for what it is: a refined and

anachronistic accomplishment for connoisseurs of the classics in an age of technologists and cosmonauts. Those who excel in it could write well in any language if they gave their minds to it, but the skill is one which helps us little to use our own tongue well or to come to grips with the meaning of Latin authors. At best, for the ordinary boy, Latin Prose Composition is a difficult and circuitous route towards the power to understand and enjoy the masterpieces of Roman literature.

To support a syllabus and teaching techniques which cohere around the central plank of translation, changes in the Common Entrance papers will be needed. In the A paper, question (1) – which is a straightforward and reasonably comprehensive sampling of basic grammar – can stand. The rudimentary accidence must be known and cannot escape scrutiny; but question (3) runs clean counter to the argument and must go.

The traditional stress on English into Latin will never be reversed – you will never get the keener blade of continuous translation almost from the outset conscientiously and properly employed in Preparatory Schools – while English sentences are required to be done into Latin in the A paper of the Common Entrance Examination. Nor, *a fortiori*, will there be early contact with Roman authors, still less rapid reading *in extenso* of interesting Latin texts. On both counts worthy practitioners of the old school are too many and too firmly entrenched in the belief that the processing of English into Latin is a mental gymnastic which works wonders in training the minds of boys to think with accuracy, clarity and precision. I speak of what I know and with respect for a point of view which I have ceased to share because it no longer serves – if it ever did – the proper ends of a classical education in the 20th century.

But excision of Question 3 is only one part of the solution; the other will rattle more swords in rusty scabbards: it is set books. To make certain that real Latin is read in Preparatory Schools and extensively read – by the artless minority as well as the average majority and the high-powered few – I would have English out of the A paper and a specified author or authors in.

A sound choice would be Cambridge University Press's attractively produced *Caesar in Gaul and Britain* (Limebeer): or prescribed portions from C. W. Baty's *Third Year Latin Reader* (Caesar, Nepos, Livy, Pliny, Cicero); or the like from M. P. O. Morford's recent *A New Latin Reader* – an interesting and enterprising compilation which includes Caesar, Nepos, Curtius, Pliny, Aulus Gellius, Eutropius and the Vulgate.

Question 2 would be the same: Latin sentences for translation into good English; but the sentences would come from the set books and be nodal ones for placing in their context as well as for translation.

The last part of the A paper – the apex and apogee – would still be continuous translation: the passage to be selected not from the set book but from the writings of the prescribed author(s). It will be closely analogous in style and substance to what has been read and identical in authorship, but not previously seen. And for the rendering of this passage into English Prose, Latin dictionaries would be allowed.

Boys with a gift of tongues will have little need of their dictionaries at this point though they will be all the better for having learnt to use them; those with average ability or sparsely equipped will know how and when to consult them – after, not before, a close look at the passage and several readings to get the gist of it. It should not be forgotten that children nowadays learn to chase meanings in an English dictionary and information in the reference library from a very early age. His second year of Latin will be soon enough for a boy to be equipped with *Langenscheidt's* Latin/English dictionary or *Lewis's Shorter Dictionary*, but he should be expert in the use of it a year later when he encounters Roman authors. Both then and thereafter it should be ever at his elbow and the source and satisfaction of much exciting traffic with words.

How many of us, whose privilege it is to teach these boys, dispense with the use of a dictionary when we are reading or rereading Caesar, Livy, or Virgil?

Some experienced teachers will shy violently from the idea of prescribed authors in the A paper of the Common Entrance Examination: much too hard, they will argue, for the average boy. I believe them to be mistaken. Nobody knows what the average boy can tackle and digest in his third year of Latin until he has been persistently and skilfully fed continuous Latin from his third week. Caesar may still be hard going for him; but the focus of his interest will be Caesar himself and events that happened in Gaul and Britain 2,000 years ago, pulsing with life in the words of a man whose versatility as soldier, statesman, and writer directly challenges comparison with Churchill. The mind of even the dullest boy can scarcely escape some contamination by Rome if he is helped through, say, the sea fight with the Veneti, or the double investment of Alesia. In place of the muddle and incomprehension which is his present lot he will have achieved something of value and may, perhaps, be prompted to return informally and with pleasure to the classics in translation in later life.

Accidence; separate and significant sentences from the set books for placing and translation; and a passage for rendering into decent idiomatic English prose from a prescribed author, though not out of the prescribed portion of his works – if the A paper was constructed on these lines then we could have in the B paper an unseen of reasonable length and moderate difficulty. There would be no separate sentences for translation into English, but this paper would also contain a question on Roman history and a question on Greek and Roman mythology: the history to be focused in a particular book such as Naomi Mitchison's *The Conquered* or Lord Bellhaven's *The Eagle and the Sun*, and the mythology to be got out of Rex Warner's *Gods and Heroes* or George Baker's *Realms of Gold*.

If the advocates of Latin Prose Composition are irresistible – and a prose may well be highly desirable for the high-flyers on their journey to major scholarships – their prose will have to be at the expense of history and mythology; but let it be optional and set in the form of re-translation of a good and exciting

passage from the prescribed book in the A paper. Rice Holmes or Handford springs to mind or even an appropriate piece from *Imperial Rome* where Rex Warner deliberately and skilfully reflects Caesar's mind in Caesar's style.

These changes in the Common Entrance papers are not cumulatively designed to make them easier or more difficult; they are certainly not reactionary nor are they meant to startle: their purpose is quite simply to incite genuine Latinity in the preparatory basement of the classics. What boys learn here should have inherent interest and value for those who will not get beyond the ground floor: equally and at the same time it should point upstairs to the top floor and the roof. And we have in the basement the inestimable advantage – which we are in danger of undervaluing and throwing away – that all boys are still required to learn Latin.

Two final points: it is a mistake to suppose that the approach to Rome via coins, epitaphs, inscriptions, medical prescriptions and so forth should be reserved for sluggish minds. One or more of these devices should be the stock-in-trade of every teacher of Latin at whatever level of intelligence he operates. The pursuit and collection of epitaphs and mottoes is as compelling and profitable a pastime for swift minds as it is for the obtuse, and I have never yet failed to rouse a reluctant form, able or dull, with some account of Latin nomenclature in Natural History. The last occasion was sparked off by a letter, postmarked Singapore, the stamps of which were inscribed with the Latin names of accurately drawn and delightfully coloured fishes and birds.

And lastly – books. A wealth of finely produced and superbly illustrated books about the Greeks and Romans – their art and architecture, history and countries – can be had today from publishers like Nelson, and Thames and Hudson. Some are very expensive, others wonderful value as paperbacks: most of them make exciting visual aids for daily use in the classroom. Especially useful among the big books are *The Birth of Western Civilization*, *Greece and Rome* (Thames and Hudson), *Athens* (by Pro-

copiou and Smith, published by Elek), *Eternal Greece* (Rex Warner and Martin Hürlimann, Thames and Hudson). In the paperback range I would pick out *Roman Art and Architecture* by Mortimer Wheeler, *Greek Art* by John Boardman and *Costume in Antiquity*, introduced by James Laver (all Thames and Hudson).

This paper has scrupulously avoided the use of any argument for the classics which relies on the transfer of skill – on their power to sharpen the edge of boys' minds in other fields of knowledge. Educational psychologists are not less subject to swings of opinion than other experts, but transference is not a respectable line of thought at the moment. Nevertheless this is an opportune moment to recall that when, in the early part of the last great war, the Minister of Education was asked why the children of this country did not spend more time on the internal combustion engine and less on dead languages, his reply was to the effect that, in his experience, those whose minds had been nurtured in the thought and literature of Greece and Rome were able to take the internal combustion engine in their stride. Lord Butler has just confirmed for me that this is an accurate account of what he said and, if I interpret him aright, his words apply with equal force to more recent developments like jet engines and computers. For the Greeks invented the method of independent rational enquiry, the Romans mediated this habit of mind to us, and I can think of no branch of knowledge, scientific or literary, which cannot be effectively explored by minds which appraise the world from this point of view.

E. J. B. LANGHORNE
is Headmaster of Dean Close Junior School, Cheltenham

APPENDIX

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LATIN: PAPER A

COMMON EXAMINATION FOR ENTRANCE TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

February 24th 1964. No. 5. 60 *minutes*

1

GIVE:

a Acc. Sing. and meaning of: cornu, eques, salus.
b Dat. Sing. and gender of: nomen, manus, spes.
c Gen. Plur. and meaning of: iter longius, eadem domus.
d Gen. Sing. and meaning of: lapis niger, pons vetus.
e English for: creverat, auctus esse, nasci, doceamus.
f Latin for: it is under the water, around the hill.
g Latin for: she has died, they will bear, we have been able, about to break.
h The full Latin versions of any *two* of the following abbreviations which are now used in English: etc., p.m., A.D., P.S., ibid., viz.

2

TRANSLATE INTO ENGLISH:

a Legionem nonam in oppidum mittunt.
b Cur opus reliquisti quod tibi dederam?
c Obsidibus imperavit ne illo die exirent.
d Clamoribus barbarorum auditis, sensit se captum iri.
e Athenis ante lucem proficisci noluit.

3

TRANSLATE INTO LATIN:

a Surely you have not waged a war against them?
b Let us all learn to write more wisely!
c Having been ordered to open the gates, she prefers to die.
d I have sung the same song again, in order to help you.
e The things which are most difficult bring the greatest glory.

4

TRANSLATE INTO ENGLISH:

The baby Heracles defeats Hera's first attempt to have him killed

Heracles, dum inter homines vivebat, Herae odio ac insidiis semper premebatur. Illa vero olim infantem Heraclem necare volens, duos serpentes ingentes misit ut puerum necarent. Heracles, qui non iam unum annum natus erat, in cunabulis dormiebat cum gemino fratre. Frater visu exterritus statim magna voce clamavit; Heracles autem, minime commotus, ambo serpentes simul raptos occidit.

cunabula, neuter pl. – cradle. geminus, -a, -um – twin.

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LATIN: PAPER B

COMMON EXAMINATION FOR ENTRANCE TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

February 26th 1964. No. 12. 60 *minutes*

1

TRANSLATE INTO ENGLISH:

a Quod metuebat ne venenum additum esset, non passus est quemquam vinum sumere.

b Cum stultissimus videatur, eam monuimus ne illi nubat.

c Postquam comperit iam cinctas esse portas, non diutius se defendere conatus est.

d *A Boastful Hero*

Aiax, quamquam minor erat virtute ac viribus, Achillem ipsum iactationibus facile superavit. Illum enim, navem conscendentem ut Troiam navigaret, narrant patri Telamoni, hortanti ut victoriam semper auxilio deorum peteret, ita respondisse: "Deorum auxilio quivis gloriam consequi potest. Ego autem meis me viribus eam consecuturum esse confido". Idem ad urbem Troiam, ubi eum Pallas Athena in acie cohortabatur, "Abi, dea", inquit "ut reliquos confirmes: ubi enim ego constiti, numquam hostis aciem perrumpet".

quivis – anyone.

2

TRANSLATE INTO LATIN:

a She has confessed these things so bravely that I cannot be angry with her.

b His brother asked me when you would arrive at Rome.

c Three years after that battle, those who lived in these islands asked the Athenians to be in command of their fleet. They knew that the Spartans were unwilling to send help; they feared also that the Spartan king would betray them to the Persians. So that winter they made an alliance and swore to set free all the Greek cities captured by the enemy.

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Latin in Preparatory Schools II

A. T. DAVIS

It is generally assumed that a boy who arrives at his Public School will study Latin as a main subject (i.e. for five or six periods a week) to O-level. In fact, it is not uncommon for something like thirty per cent of a year's entry to shed the subject at the end of their first or second year, and my own experience of the work of the survivors hardly justifies much optimism that all of them derive real benefit from their study of the language: a boy may even secure a pass at O-level without having read more than disjointed snippets of original Latin, or with any but the most superficial acquaintance with the history, life and outlook of a people whose experience underlies so much of our own cultural heritage. The reasons for this are many, and those of us who teach are not without responsibility – the place of Latin in the curriculum is so long established that it is easy to sink into complacent apathy and follow the line of least resistance.

The general tendency for Universities to shed O-level Latin as an entrance requirement is perhaps the most serious external threat to the subject's chances of survival, but one of the more encouraging results of this has been the stimulus it has given to re-thinking at all levels: in *Re-appraisal* Professor Brink led the way with a plea that the purpose of the O-level Latin course should be more clearly defined, and the important observation that it should be a 'one-way' course, preferably of translation from Latin; the first two numbers of *Didaskalos* have contained

not only general reflections on the value of 'small classics' but detailed examination and criticism of O-level papers as set by two boards. In this paper, it is my aim not to produce arguments for the retention of Latin, or to outline the possible development of a Public School course, but to point to some of the problems which arise on entry and offer for criticism material whose aim is to solve them; in particular, there will be no discussion of the age at which Latin should be started, an important question, but one too sizable for examination within my self-imposed limits.

The Preparatory Schools, many of which have enthusiastic and knowledgeable classical teachers on their staffs, succeed in producing A stream boys of admirable quality; but as soon as one moves to the B and C streams the products are less impressive. Apart from the obvious difference in natural ability, more serious defects present themselves, most of them stemming from the Common Entrance papers as now set. The Preparatory Schools are in a particularly difficult position: many of their pupils do not take 'eleven-plus', and those who do frequently fail because the schools quite rightly refuse to devote time to preparation for what is widely held to be a dubious examination. This means that the schools must secure a high pass-rate in Common Entrance if they are to maintain their numbers, and this in turn, reasonably enough, encourages concentration on methods of teaching likely to be most effective to this end. It is here, to my mind, that the Common Entrance examination in Latin exerts its most baneful influence: in the compulsory A paper it is by no means impossible for a boy to score eighty per cent, and yet have little or no grasp of the most elementary principles of an inflected language and, quite possibly, no background knowledge either; this phenomenon, though reflecting well on the sheer mechanical efficiency of the teaching, is hardly likely to lead to much further progress, or to stimulate any sort of intellectual curiosity and interest in the pupil, and is responsible for much of the disrepute into which Latin has fallen in the eyes of its unwilling students.

The examination is open to three serious criticisms: the grammar question in paper A is unpractical (it is no use for a boy to know that *consuli* is dative singular if he has no conception of how the case is likely to fit into the pattern of a sentence); the double diet of Composition *and* Translation puts too heavy a strain on the intellect of the average and below-average pupil, and leads to the indifferent performance of both – the most likely preparation he will receive for the two papers as they stand will be the forcing of banal English sentences into Latin constructions whose point, isolated from reading, he cannot see, and a grappling with unrealistic Latin sentences whose subject-matter, all too often devoid of continuity or interest, is unlikely to inspire him to any real effort to find out what they mean; finally, the sizable proportion of Composition in the papers will probably mean that time which could have been usefully devoted to acquisition of vocabulary and simple etymology has been spent laboriously learning rules for 'constructions' which he may finally be able to repeat parrot-fashion without having the slightest idea of their significance.

What sort of grounding, then, should the pupil receive, and how should it be tested? My basic assumption is that the main aim is to prepare him for the reading of original Latin with some fluency and understanding (although even a revised O-level course may present linguistic difficulties which will force weaker candidates to drop the subject at various stages, it does not follow that courses cannot be devised which will enable them to meet Latin writers and derive some benefit from their limited study). Composition, therefore, should disappear as a compulsory question; Mr Langhorne's suggestion, that it should be optional in the B paper, has the justification that boys who proceed to specialize in classics still have to satisfy A-level and university examiners of their ability to compose, and there is no reason why those who like and are good at composition should not from an early stage be able to use this means of increasing their literary sensibility, provided that the weaker pupils are not forced to flounder along in their wake. The grammar question

should be re-shaped so as to give some indication of the extent to which a pupil has grasped the principles of elementary syntax. The bulk of the paper should consist of translation, carefully graded to make sure that the moderate pupil has a chance of scoring sixty per cent or thereabouts, and emphasis should be laid on the quality of English and grasp of the wider as opposed to the merely literal meaning of a passage. Mr Langhorne has shown me the suggestions he proposes to make in this field; my main criticism of them would be of a certain optimism about the standard a boy of 12 to 13 could be expected to reach, although the A stream might be able to read as widely as his programme demands. Sound foundations and confidence in dealing with simple language are for the average pupil more valuable than quick progress.

Appended is a specimen paper of a kind which, one might hope, would encourage a fresher approach; it is intended not to provide a definitive solution but to illustrate a possible line of development. In Paper A the four sections of the first question form a connected narrative, but have been divided for ease of questioning; the emphasis on these questions is very much on case-usage, just as that of question 2 is on subordinate clauses. If sixty-five per cent of the marks were allotted to these questions, the weaker candidates ought to be able to score about fifty. The third question, a straightforward piece of translation, might add too much of a burden for slower workers, but would perhaps be justified on the grounds that concentration on translation would lead to a higher standard (and speed) of performance, and that it would provide the means of a wider scale of marking. In the specimens, few words have been given, but it would obviously be desirable to include in footnotes those words outside the agreed range of vocabulary whose meanings the candidates could not reasonably be expected to guess. In Paper B the piece for translation is designedly difficult, and there is an alternative piece of verse which the more talented candidates could be encouraged to attempt. The wide range of topics in the background question is designed to give the weaker pupil a

chance to display his interest and to encourage background knowledge over as broad a field as possible.[1]

In conclusion, I have tried to be forthright but constructive. My criticism of the products of Preparatory Schools is aimed not at those who teach but at the pattern into which so much of their teaching is being forced. There is a desperate need for revision of the Common Entrance examination if Latin in Preparatory Schools is not to collapse under the weight of its own futility; nothing less than open statement of this opinion can produce the sort of changes which will enable the Public Schools in their turn to provide a more worthwhile and purposeful course.

[1] In the specimens as they stand there is obviously too much material; only by producing fairly long extracts did I think it possible to give a fair idea of a possible standard of difficulty.

A. T. DAVIS
is a Classics Master
at Harrow School

APPENDIX

PAPER A

1 hour

1 *The four Latin sentences printed below make up a brief piece of connected narrative. Read them through (without translating on paper) and then answer the questions attached to each section.*

a Tota Gallia superata senatores timore affecti Caesarem e provincia discedere iusserunt.

i In what case are the first three words? Translate them, making clear their relation to the rest of the sentence.

ii What case is *timore*? Translate it, supplying the English preposition which best fits the context.

iii What case is *affecti* and why?

iv What case is *provincia*? How do you know?

v Give the principal parts and meaning of the verb from which *iusserunt* comes.

b Non placebat Caesari, qui non ignorabat vitia senatus, tantam potestatem deponere; itaque iussis neglectis cum exercitu in Italiam profectus est.

i What case is *Caesari* and why?

ii What case is *senatus*?

iii What part of the verb is *deponere* and why?

iv What gender is *potestatem*? What case is it in and why?

v Translate *in Italiam*.

c Mox bellum inter Caesarem et senatum ortum est; senatus Pompeium, inimicum Caesaris, copiis suis praefecit.

i What case is *senatum* and why?

ii What case is *senatus*?

iii What case is *inimicum* and why?

iv Give the principal parts of the verb from which *praefecit* comes.

v What is the Latin for: 'to put the general in command of the soldiers'?

d Pompeius et senatores celeriter se victuros esse sperabant, sed propter dissensiones Romam defendere non poterant. Postea Pompeius Italia relicta in Graeciam se recepit, ubi postero anno a Caesare victus est. Caesar prudentia et clementia multis eorum qui pro Pompeio pugnaverant pepercit.

i Write down from this section, with its meaning in English: one adverb; one prepositional phrase; one subordinate verb.

ii To whom does the second *se* refer? How do you know?

iii What part of the verb is *victuros esse*? Translate the words *se victuros esse sperabant*.

iv In what case are the words *postero anno*? Translate them, supplying the right English preposition to fit the context.

v Write down the Latin word which is the object of *pepercit*.

vi Give the principal parts and meaning of the verb from which *pepercit* comes.

2 *Read through the piece of Latin below, and then answer the questions attached to it. No questions are asked to which the answer is not in the Latin. You should decide which Latin words are relevant to each question and translate them in your answer.*

Fabricius gives King Pyrrhus two proofs of his upright character

Pyrrhus autem unum ex legatis qui a Romanis ut captivos redimerent missi sunt, Fabricium nomine, ita admiratus est ut, quod eum pauperem esse cognovit, ei promitteret quartam regni partem si ad se transiret; sed a Fabricio contemptus est. Haud ita multo post, contra Pyrrhum cum exercitu missus est Fabricius. Iamque, cum vicina castra ipse et rex haberent, medicus Pyrrhi ad Fabricium nocte venit, promittens se veneno Pyrrhum occisurum si pecuniae aliquid sibi daretur: quem Fabricius vinctum iussit reduci ad dominum, regemque certiorem fieri quae medicus contra vitam eius promisisset.

EUTROPIUS II, 12-13, adapted

i Who was Fabricius?
ii Why had the *legati* been sent?
iii What was the result of Pyrrhus' admiration for Fabricius?
iv On what condition was his offer to Fabricius made?
v Why did Pyrrhus have reason to suppose that his offer would be accepted?
vi Why was it easy for the doctor to approach Fabricius?
vii What was the nature of the doctor's offer to Fabricius?
viii On what condition was the doctor's offer made?
ix What action did Fabricius take concerning the doctor?
x What instructions did Fabricius give concerning the king?

3 TRANSLATE:

Hannibal explains the origin of his hatred for the Romans

Pater meus, cum puer essem non amplius novem annos natus, in Hispaniam imperator proficiscens Carthagine Iovi hostias immolavit. Inde quaesivit a me num vellem secum in castra proficisci. Id cum libenter accepissem atque ab eo petere coepissem ne dubitaret me ducere, tum ille, 'Ita faciam', inquit, 'si mihi fidem quam postulo dederis'. Simul me ad aram adduxit servisque dimissis me eam tenere iussit et iurare me numquam in amicitia cum Romanis fore. Id ego iusiurandum usque ad hanc aetatem ita conservavi ut nemini dubium esse debeat quin reliquo tempore eadem mente sim futurus.

C. NEPOS, Hannibal 2, adapted

immolo, are: sacrifice
hostia, ae, f: sacrificial victim
non dubium est quin: 'there is no doubt that . . .'

PAPER B

1 hour

1 TRANSLATE either *a* or *b*:

a *Umbrenus approaches the representatives of the Allobroges (a tribe in Gaul), with the intention of playing on their grievances and persuading them to join a conspiracy*

Eodem tempore Romae Lentulus P. Umbreno imperat ut legatos Allobrogum adeat eisque, si possit, persuadeat ut socii in bello fiant, existimans eos publice privatimque aere alieno oppressos esse. Umbrenus, quod in Gallia negotiatus erat, principibus civitatis notus erat atque eos noverat. Itaque sine mora, ubi primum legatos in foro conspexit, rogare coepit quem exitum tantis malis sperarent. Postquam illos audivit queri de avaritia magistratuum et accusare senatum quod nihil in eo auxili esset, 'At ego', inquit, 'vobis, si modo viri esse vultis, rationem ostendam qua tanta mala effugiatis'.

SALLUST, Catiline 40, adapted

aes alienum, aeris alieni, n: debt.
negotior, ari, dep.: transact business
ratio, onis, f: (here)–method

b *Ovid, condemned to exile by the Emperor Augustus, describes the scene at his house in Rome on his last night there*

Adloquor extremum maestos abiturus amicos,
  qui modo de multis unus et alter erant.
Uxor amans flentem flens acrius ipsa tenebat;
  imbre per indignas usque cadente genas.
Nata procul Libycis aberat diversa sub oris,
  nec poterat fati certior esse mei.
Quocumque adspiceres, luctus gemitusque sonabant,
  formaque non taciti funeris intus erat.

OVID, Tristia, 1.3.15 ff.

usque, adv.: continually, with no intermission, the whole time
Libycus, a, um, adj.: of Libya, African

2 *Candidates should attempt Question* a *or Question* b. *It is assumed that those who do Question* a *will have read Caesar, Bellum Gallicum, IV*, 20 – end *and V*, 1-23.

a TRANSLATE INTO LATIN:

For this reason, Caesar sent on Volusenus in a warship, with orders to find out all he could and return to Gaul without any waste of time. Meanwhile, he took with him all his troops and made for the territory of the Morini, with the thought that from there he would have no difficulty in crossing to Britain. But the Britons, discovering his intentions from traders, sent representatives with promises of hostages and of complete obedience to the Romans. On hearing of this, Caesar urged the representatives to remain loyal to Rome and sent them away. Five days afterwards, Volusenus returned and reported what he had seen, in spite of the fact that he had not left his ship.

b Write briefly on *two* of the following:

i What happened to Aeneas between the time he fled from Troy and founded Alba Longa?

ii Write a minimum of five lines on two of the following: Circe; Medea; Baucis and Philemon; The Sibylline Books; Cacus; Medusa.

iii Is there any reason to suppose that the Romans had a sense of humour?

iv What do you know about the relations of the Roman Government with Christians?

v Describe, with examples, the Roman system of names. In what respects was it similar to our own?

vi What were the views of the Greeks and Romans about life after death?

[The Latin texts in this paper are drawn, with permission, from Cobban and Colebourn, Civis Romanus (Methuen) and Kennedy, Latin Unseens from Roman History (Macmillan).]